

A NEW DAY PEDIATRIC PSYCHOLOGY

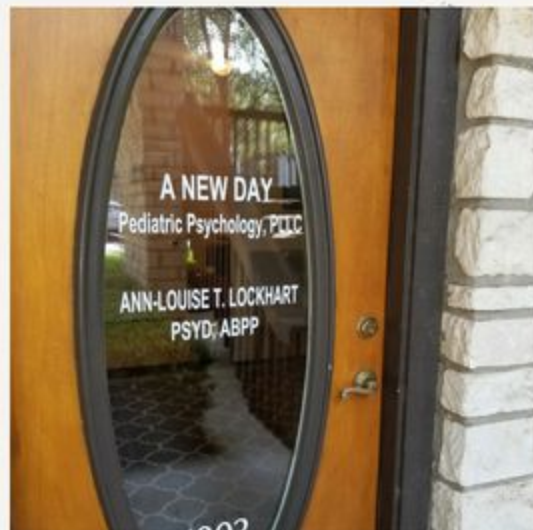
Healing the hurt. Educating the mind. Inspiring the soul.



AUGMENTATIVE ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION: A DIFFERENT WAY TO COMMUNICATE

BY ASHLEY MOHESKY
FEATURED WRITER

Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) is another way of communicating without verbally speaking. For example, when people use hand gestures, facial expressions, texting, social media websites, or a synthesized speech device, they are incorporating AAC into their language. As an author and future counselor with Cerebral Palsy, I have used AAC my entire life, whether it was by pointing to an object or using a communication device. My current device is called a Grid Pad that allows me to communicate, compose emails, complete homework assignments, and much more with my eyes. In fact, this newsletter was written by only using my eyes. I never knew how much I needed an eye tracking computer until I received my device. It has opened up my world in so many ways that I cannot imagine. Previous communication devices helped me to get my point across, but they were also hindering my ability to show the world what I can do.



A New Day Pediatric Psychology, PLLC falls under the vision of Dr. Ann-Louise T. Lockhart, Pediatric Psychologist and Board Certified in Child and Adolescent Psychology.

A New Day specializes in evidence-based behavioral health treatment, interventions, and psychological evaluations for children, adolescents, and adults with known or suspected behavioral health and/or medical conditions affecting all aspects of development and functioning.

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There are many misconceptions surrounding AAC, especially for those who use a speech device. However, the main one that can be highly frustrating is that people do not have the same intelligence as individuals who do not use a communication device. When a person communicates through synthesized speech, it can be difficult to get their message out in a timely manner. Therefore, society believes that the person is unable to hold a conversation. Even though this misconception can be hard to debunk, it can be diminished through education. As the world continues to evolve into a technology-based society, it is likely that people will begin to use AAC, even if they have the ability to speak verbally. This can foster an understanding of what it is like to use a communication device. It is also important to remain patient with someone using a speech device and remember that they are doing the best they can to create meaningful relationships.

For children who use a communication device, there can be times when they choose to not use it due to the difficulty of the device or being afraid that no one will want to talk to them. Parents, teachers, and speech language pathologists need to work together to show that it is okay to communicate differently, and it is going to take practice to use their device efficiently. AAC does not have to be a negative aspect of people lives. It just means that there is more than one way to communicate, and it is a beautiful thing.

Meaningful Ways to Create Relationships with Nonverbal Individuals

Here are a few ways to communicate with individuals who are nonverbal:

1. Speak to them in a normal tone, meaning do not talk to them like a baby, as this implies that the person is unable to understand what is being said.
2. If a communication device is apparent, do not try to finish the person's sentences as they are typing.
3. Do not assume that valuable conversations cannot be held.
4. Do not attempt to type on the person's device, instead of verbally speaking. Just because the individual cannot talk does not mean that the entire conversation needs to be spoken through AAC.

Once these tips are utilized, people are able to see that AAC users are just like everyone else. They just happen to communicate in a unique way.

**Have you tried everything and nothing works?
You are not alone!**



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STAY TUNED

This newsletter is issued every first and third week of each month.

The purpose of this newsletter is to educate, inspire, and bring healing and awareness by discussing a variety of behavioral health and medical conditions.

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